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SUBJECT: DFM TANAKA'S BURMA VISIT: READ-OUT FROM THE JAPANESE EMBASSY

REF: A. TOKYO 1695 AND PREVIOUS

[¶](#)B. STATE 50731

Classified By: P/E Chief W. Patrick Murphy for Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[¶](#)1. (C) On March 25, Japanese Embassy political counselor Ichiro Maruyama provided a full read-out on Deputy Foreign Minister Hitoshi Tanaka's March 22-24 visit to Rangoon, his fourth visit to Burma spanning the past three decades. Maruyama's brief on Tanaka's meeting with Prime Minister Soe Win generally paralleled the read-out Embassy Tokyo received on March 24 (ref A). In addition, Maruyama, who accompanied Tanaka to all of his meetings in Burma, addressed the DFM's encounters with Foreign Minister Nyan Win and Deputy Foreign Minister Kyaw Thu.

[¶](#)2. (C) Tanaka's primary incentive in visiting Burma at this time, according to Maruyama, was in preparation for the May 6-7 ASEM foreign ministers meeting in Kyoto. Tanaka had been personally engaged in the effort to accord Burma membership in ASEM and feels compelled to ensure that, although membership was unconditional, the SPDC understands the need to take important political steps. (Maruyama noted that FM Nyan Win expressed a "willingness" to attend the Kyoto ASEM meeting, but did not commit, an indication that the SPDC generals have yet to make a decision on Burma's participation.) Highlights of Maruyama's read-out:

--On March 23 Tanaka met separately with, in order, PM Soe Win (15 minutes), DFM Kyaw Thu (30 minutes), and FM Nyan Win (45 minutes). DFM Kyaw also hosted a dinner that evening for Tanaka. The GOJ had also asked for a meeting with SPDC Secretary-1 Lt Gen Thein Sein, but was told he was "busy with

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the National Convention (NC) and not available." The GOJ had considered requesting meetings with SPDC Chairman Than Shwe and Vice Chairman Maung Aye, but concluded that the GOB was unlikely to be responsive.

--Tanaka, briefed by his Embassy that he would probably only have three or four minutes to get his points across, began each of his meetings with a "quick and clear" message: The international community, including Japan, has concerns about the current political situation in Myanmar (Burma). In light of Burma's taking of the ASEAN chair in 2006, the GOB should endeavor to take three important, immediate steps: 1) release Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK); 2) relax limits and restriction on the National League for Democracy (NLD); and 3) allow participation of ASSK and the NLD in the road map process, particularly the ongoing NC.

--Maruyama said that the three GOB officials responded to Tanaka's points in "almost identical fashion." None of them gave any indication that there would be a possibility of ASSK's and/or the NLD's participation in the political process. Each of the GOB officials said that the GOB had invited the NLD to join the NC, but "ASSK and the NLD rejected our offers." Each official also delivered a predictable "explanation" of Burma's historical woes and the regime's efforts to control armed groups and unify the country.

--PM Soe Win stated that the "basic policy" of the GOB is to take steps toward democratization. However, said Maruyama, the PM did not respond directly to Tanaka's points nor did he make any link between GOB steps, which were unspecified, and the GOB's role as ASEAN chair. At the end of the meeting, according to Maruyama, PM Soe Win said he would "take to heart" DFM Tanaka's message. "Who knows what that really means," added Maruyama in his read-out.

[¶](#)3. (C) When asked how Tanaka measured the success of his visit, Maruyama said the DFM planned to meet with Embassy Bangkok on March 25 and would likely share his personal views there. However, Maruyama said that, from his own perspective, Tanaka accomplished his mission by raising important points "clearly and up front." However, Maruyama emphasized, the GOB had not given any indication that it would act on any of Tanaka's three points.

McMullen